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ABSTRACT

This paper is the third in a series that focuses on the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act. It reports on a study of what parents know and think about campus safety issues and the Clery Act. During a college's summer orientation program, parents were selected at random from those who passed the checkout table at the end of the program. Responses of 435 parents who also completed a brief questionnaire show that parents' knowledge of the Clery Act and their use of the information contained in the federally mandated report is low. Parent response to crime awareness strategies and administrators who shared this information with them varied by parent educational status and experience with children in college. (SLD)

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Parents' Views on the Jeanne Clery Campus Crime Act and Campus Safety

By

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PREFACE

This report is the thirteenth in a series of policy papers issued by the Educational Policy Institute (EPI) of Virginia Tech. The Institute is an interdisciplinary group of faculty with common interests in education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The mission of EPI is to: (a) establish an organization devoted to educational policy research and services in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the nation, (b) conduct research intended to inform educational policy makers, (c) focus research interests of the faculty and graduate students on educational policy issues, and (d) act as a service unit for educational policy groups such as the State Board of Education and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

This paper is the third of our reports that focuses on the on the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act. College administrators, those involved directly in campus law enforcement, policy makers, the media and a variety of advocacy groups continue to discuss how to improve the law and increase its effectiveness. This timely research adds important new information about what parents know and think about campus safety issues and the Clery Act.

Additional copies of this report may be obtained by contacting Dr. Steven M. Janosik at the Institute or they can be downloaded from EPI's web site. I hope you find the information to be of interest.

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ABSTRACT

In a single institution study of 435 parents, the researcher found that parents' knowledge of the Clery Act and their use of the information contained in the federally mandated report to be low. Parent response to crime awareness strategies and administrators who shared this information with them varied by parent status.

Parents' Views on the Clery Act and Campus Safety
by Steven M. Janosik

Since its passage in 1990, the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act continues to be a frequent topic of conversation in Congress, the popular press, and on college campuses. During the past 12 years, the Act has been amended several times to expand the reporting requirements and clarify how college administrators are to report campus crime. The Act's primary purpose is to force college administrators to report, in a consistent manner, incidents of campus crime. The goal of the legislation is: (a) to provide consistent crime information so that parents, potential students, and potential employees will be better able to evaluate an institution before they make a commitment to it, (b) to educate students and employees about campus crime so that they might better protect themselves from the risks in their campus environment, and (c) to reduce crime (Gregory & Janosik, in press

During this same time period, researchers have studied institutional response to the Act. In a study on admissions office practices, for example, Gehring and Galloway (1997) concluded that institutions were still unsure of the Act's reporting requirements and that many were not including the appropriate material in admission packets.

The response and reactions of groups most affected by the Act have also been studied. Janosik and Gregory (in press) assessed the views of campus law enforcement officers and changes in campus law enforcement practices. They found that a majority of law enforcement officers credited the Act with improving crime reporting practices, but this same group felt that the Clery Act did little to reduce crime on campus and that few students made use of the mandated reports required by the Act.

Student knowledge and changes in student behavior based on this knowledge have also been measured. Janosik (2001), Janosik and Gehring (in press), and Parkinson (2001) found that even after 10 years, only about 25% of students knew about or had read any of the mandated reports required by the Act. Less than 8% of respondents in two large studies reported using campus crime information in making their college choice decision.

Absent in the literature is any study on parents' knowledge of the Clery Act and their views of campus safety. This study addresses such a void. The following questions guided this research:

1. Are parents aware of the Clery Campus Crime Act?

2. Do parents use the campus crime information they are provided?

3. What do parents think about the strategies college administrators use to inform students about campus crime issues?

4. How do parents respond to the college administrators who share this kind of information with them?

Method

Participants

To determine the answers to these questions, the researcher chose to focus this study on parents of first-year students at a large research institution in the southeast. During the first week of the institution's summer orientation program, 450 parents were selected at random from those who walked by the checkout table at the conclusion of the two-day orientation program. This group was selected by asking every third parent who walked by the checkout table to participate. This sample represented 8.6% of the approximately 5,200 families who were scheduled to attend the summer orientation program. Only one parent per family was asked to participate.

Procedures

When a parent was identified, the participant was asked to complete and return a short questionnaire about the Clery Act and campus crime before leaving campus. Of those who were selected, 424 completed questionnaires and returned them before leaving the area. Twenty-six chose to take a prepaid return envelope with them and promised to return the questionnaire by mail. All were reminded of the importance of the topic and were told that their responses would remain anonymous and reported as grouped data. Responses were tabulated and descriptive statistics were developed. Because these data were categorical, chi-squares were calculated to test for significant differences among parental groups.

Instrument

The researcher used a 24-item questionnaire designed specifically for this project. Twenty-one questions addressed the parent's knowledge of the Act and asked if the respondent had used the information provided by the mandated reports. These questions also elicited information about parent reaction to college administrators, strategies to address campus safety, and the college environment experienced during this visit to campus. Many of these items were adapted from questionnaires previously developed by the researcher (Janosik, 2001; Janosik & Gehring, in press; Janosik & Gregory, in press). The reliability of these very similar items was reported as .73 in other studies.

The researcher added three other questions to determine the educational level of the respondent, if the parent was enrolling a first child in college, and if anyone in the immediate family had been a victim of crime.

Results

Of the 450 questionnaires that were distributed 435 (97%) were returned. All respondents were parents of first-year students. Two hundred thirty-six (54%) parents were sending their first child to college while 199 (45%) parents reported additional children attending college. Thirty-seven (8.5%) of respondents reported their highest education level as

having some high school experience or having graduated high school. The rest of the group (398, 91.5%) reported having attended college or having graduated college. One hundred thirteen (26%) of respondents indicated that a member of their immediate family had been a victim of crime. The remainder (322, 74%) reported no such experience. Finally, these parents were asked how safe they thought their student would be on and off the campus. Of those responding, 432 (99.8%) indicated that their student would be safe or very safe on campus and 423 (98.4%) thought that their student would be safe or very safe in the areas immediately adjacent to campus.

The reliability of the 21 items using this parent sample was calculated using the Cronbach alpha model. The reliability coefficient was .77 and confirmed the internal consistency of the instrument. Responses were analyzed by educational level, experience with children in college, and experience with crime in the immediate family.

Parent Knowledge of the Act and Use of Mandated Reports

About one quarter of the respondents knew about the Clery Campus Crime Act and approximately 40% remembered receiving the campus crime summary in their student's admission packet. Although parents with less education were less likely to know about the Act, this difference was not significant. Approximately 25% of parents remembered reading the summary.

When asked if this information influenced their thinking about their students' college choice, affirmative responses ranged from a low of 3% to a high of 11%. Parents in families where an immediate family member had been a victim of crime (11%) were statistically more likely to be influenced by this information than those parents (4%) who did not have such an experience ($\chi^2 = 5.85$, df = 1, p = .016).

About 22% of the respondents remembered receiving the institution's complete annual report and about 15% reported reading it. Parents with less education and parents who had not experienced crime in their immediate family were less likely than their respective counterparts to read the annual report. However, these differences were not significant. These data can be found in Table 1.

Parents' Views of the Institutions Campus Crime Strategies

About one-third of parents thought their student would read the institution's annual crime report, and roughly 58% thought if their son or daughter read the report, this information would change the way he or she protected property. Fewer parents (54%) thought the information contained in the annual report would produce change in how students protected themselves from harm, and about the same number (52%) thought this information would produce change in how their student moved around the campus. No significant differences between groups were found (see Table 2).

Table 1

Chi-Square Results on Parent Knowledge of the Act and Use of Mandated Reports

Item	Yes	No	Chi-Square	df	p
Knew of the Act					
Education level					
High school	6 (16%)	31 (84%)	2.09	1	.149
College	108 (27%)	273 (73%)			
Total	114 (26%)	304 (74%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	63 (27%)	173 (73%)	.064	1	.801
Second or more	51 (26%)	148 (74%)			
Total	114 (26%)	321 (73%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	36 (32%)	77 (68%)	2.52	1	.112
No victim	78 (24%)	244 (76%)			
Total	114 (26%)	321 (74%)			
Remembered receiving summary in student's admission packet					
Education level					
High school	16 (43%)	21 (57%)	.109	1	.741
College	161 (41%)	237 (59%)			
Total	177 (41%)	258 (59%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	95 (40%)	141 (60%)	.041	1	.840
Second or more	82 (41%)	117 (59%)			
Total	177 (41%)	258 (59%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	48 (43%)	65 (57%)	.202	1	.653
No victim	129 (40%)	193 (60%)			
Total	177 (41%)	258 (59%)			

Table 1 (con't)
Chi-Square Results on Parent Knowledge of the Act and Use of Mandated Reports

Item	Yes	No	Chi-Square	df	p
Remembered reading the summary					
Educational level					
High school	8 (22%)	29 (78%)	.223	1	.637
College	100 (25%)	298 (75%)			
Total	108 (25%)	327 (75%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	61 (26%)	175 (74%)	.288	1	.592
Second or more	47 (24%)	152 (76%)			
Total	108 (25%)	327 (75%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	29 (26%)	84 (74%)	.057	1.	.811
No victim	79 (24%)	243 (76%)			
Total	108 (25%)	327 (75%)			
Remembered the summary influencing your thinking about the enrollment decision					
Educational level					
High school	1 (3%)	36 (97%)	.771	1	.380
College	25 (6%)	373 (94%)			
Total	29 (6%)	409 (94%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	14 (6%)	222 (94%)	.002	1	.966
Second or more	12 (6%)	187 (94%)			
Total	26 (6%)	409 (94%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	12 (11%)	101 (89%)	5.85	1	.016
No victim	14 (4%)	308 (96%)			
Total	26 (6%)	409 (94%)			

Table 1 (con't)
Chi-Square Results on Parent Knowledge of the Act and Use of Mandated Reports

Item	Yes	No	Chi-Square	df	p
Remembered receiving the institution's annual report					
Educational level					
High school	5 (13%)	32 (87%)	1.642	1	.200
College	90 (23%)	308 (77%)			
Total	95 (22%)	340 (78%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	53 (22%)	183 (78%)	.116	1	.734
Second or more	42 (21%)	157 (79%)			
Total	95 (22%)	340 (78%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	28 (25%)	85 (75%)	.773	1	.379
No victim	67 (21%)	255 (79%)			
Total	95 (22%)	340 (78%)			
Remembered reading the institution's annual report					
Educational level					
High school	5 (14%)	32 (86%)	.065	1	.799
College	60 (15%)	338 (85%)			
Total	65 (15%)	370 (85%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	34 (14%)	202 (86%)	.117	1	.733
Second or more	31 (16%)	168 (84%)			
Total	65 (15%)	370 (85%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	20 (18%)	93 (82%)	.913	1	.339
No victim	45 (14%)	277 (86%)			
Total	65 (15%)	370 (85%)			

* Some percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 2
Chi-Square Results on Parent Views of Campus Safety Strategies

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Think that their student would read the institution's annual crime report						
Education level						
High school	16 (43%)	15 (41%)	6 (16%)	1.86	2	.396
College	134 (34%)	207 (52%)	57 (14%)			
Total	150 (35%)	222 (50%)	63 (15%)			
Experience with children in college						
First child	86 (36%)	115 (49%)	35 (15%)	1.15	2	.562
Second or more	64 (32%)	107 (54%)	28 (14%)			
Total	150 (35%)	222 (51%)	63 (14%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family						
Victim	39 (35%)	57 (50%)	17 (15%)	.044	2	.978
No victim	111 (35%)	165 (51%)	46 (14%)			
Total	157 (36%)	278 (64%)	63 (14%)			
Think that annual student would change the way the student protects property						
Education level						
High school	21 (57%)	7 (19%)	9 (24%)	.1.23	2	.541
College	231 (58%)	51 (13%)	116 (29%)			
Total	252 (58%)	58 (13%)	125 (29%)			
Experience with children in college						
First child	143 (60%)	32 (14%)	61 (26%)	2.14	2	.364
Second or more	109 (55%)	26 (13%)	64 (32%)			
Total	253 (58%)	58 (13%)	125 (29%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family						
Victim	49 (61%)	16 (14%)	28 (25%)	1.16	2	.558
No victim	212 (57%)	42 (13%)	97 (30%)			
Total	261 (58%)	58 (13%)	125 (29%)			

Table 2 (con't)
Chi-Square Results on Parent Views of Campus Safety Strategies

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Think that the annual report would change the way student protects self						
Educational level						
High school	19 (51%)	8 (22%)	10 (27%)	1.14	2	.566
College	215 (54%)	60 (15%)	123 (31%)			
Total	234 (53%)	68 (17%)	133 (30%)			
Experience with children in college						
First child	132 (56%)	37 (16%)	67 (28%)	1.24	2	..537
Second or more	102 (51%)	31 (16%)	66 (33%)			
Total	234 (54%)	68 (15%)	133 (31%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family						
Victim	64 (57%)	18 (16%)	31 (27%)	.731	2	.694
No victim	170 (53%)	50 (15%)	102 (32%)			
Total	234 (54%)	68 (16%)	133 (31%)			
Think the annual report would change the way the student moves around campus						
Educational level						
High school	19 (51%)	7 (19%)	11 (30%)	.134	2	.935
College	209 (52%)	66 (17%)	123 (31%)			
Total	228 (52%)	73 (17%)	134 (31%)			
Experience with children in college						
First child	129 (54%)	41 (17%)	66 (28%)	.1.95	2	.376
Second or more	99 (50%)	32 (16%)	68 (34%)			
Total	228 (52%)	73 (17%)	134 (31%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family						
Victim	62 (55%)	21 (19%)	30 (26%)	1.37	2	.504
No victim	166 (52%)	52 (16%)	104 (32%)			
Total	228 (52%)	73 (17%)	134 (31%)			

Table 2 (con't)
Chi-Square Results on Parent Views of Campus Safety Strategies

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Think student would read flyers, posters, news articles, or email about campus safety						
Educational level						
High school	23 (62%)	3 (8%)	11 (30%)	2.05	2	.359
College	272 (68%)	46 (12%)	80 (20%)			
Total	295 (67%)	49 (12%)	91 (21%)			
Experience with children in college						
First child	156 (66%)	29 (12%)	51 (22%)	.821	2	.663
Second or more	139 (70%)	20 (10%)	40 (20%)			
Total	295 (68%)	49 (11%)	91 (21%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family						
Victim	81 (71%)	11 (10%)	21 (19%)	1.05	2	.591
No victim	214 (67%)	38 (12%)	70 (22%)			
Total	295 (68%)	49 (11%)	91 (21%)			
Think their student would attend a campus crime prevention/awareness program						
Educational level						
High school	10 (27%)	12 (32%)	15 (41%)	2.54	2	.280
College	72 (18%)	175 (44%)	151 (38%)			
Total	82 (19%)	187 (43%)	166 (38%)			
Experience with children in college						
First child	46 (20%)	100 (42%)	90 (38%)	.158	2	.924
Second or more	36 (18%)	87 (44%)	76 (38%)			
Total	82 (19%)	187 (43%)	166 (38%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family						
Victim	23 (20%)	50 (44%)	40 (35%)	.545	2	.762
No victim	59 (18%)	137 (43%)	126 (39%)			
Total	82 (19%)	187 (43%)	166 (38%)			

Table 2 (con't)
Chi-Square Results on Parent Views of Campus Safety Strategies

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Think these materials and programs would change the way students protect property						
Educational level						
High school	19 (51%)	9 (24%)	9 (24%)	8.10	2	.017
College	220 (55%)	36 (10%)	140 (35%)			
Total	239 (55%)	45 (11%)	149 (34%)			
Experience with children in college						
First child	130 (55%)	22 (9%)	84 (36%)	1.32	2	.516
Second or more	109 (55%)	25 (13%)	65 (32%)			
Total	239 (55%)	47 (11%)	149 (34%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family						
Victim	63 (56%)	11 (10%)	39 (34%)	.183	2	.913
No victim	176 (55%)	36 (11%)	110 (34%)			
Total	239 (55%)	47 (11%)	149 (34%)			
Think these materials and programs would change the way the student protects self						
Educational level						
High school	17 (46%)	10 (27%)	10 (27%)	7.76	2	.021
College	206 (52%)	45 (11%)	147 (37%)			
Total	223 (51%)	55 (13%)	157 (36%)			
Experience with children in college						
First child	122 (52%)	27 (11%)	87 (37%)	.694	2	.707
Second or more	101 (51%)	28 (14%)	70 (35%)			
Total	223 (51%)	55 (13%)	157 (36%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family						
Victim	59 (52%)	11 (10%)	43 (38%)	1.21	2	.546
No victim	164 (51%)	44 (14%)	114 (35%)			
Total	223 (51%)	55 (13%)	157 (36%)			

Table 2 (con't)
Chi-Square Results on Parent Views of Campus Safety Strategies

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Think these materials and programs would change the way the student moves around the campus						
Educational level						
High school	18 (49%)	10 (27%)	9 (24%)	6.61	2	.037
College	202 (51%)	50 (13%)	146 (37%)			
Total	220 (51%)	60 (14%)	155 (35%)			
Experience with children in college						
First child	122 (52%)	29 (12%)	85 (36%)	.997	2	.608
Second or more	98 (50%)	31 (15%)	70 (35%)			
Total	220 (50%)	60 (14%)	155 (36%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family						
Victim	59 (52%)	11 (10%)	43 (38%)	2.15	2	.340
No victim	161 (50%)	49 (15%)	112 (35%)			
Total	220 (51%)	60 (14%)	155 (35%)			

* Some percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

More parents (68%) thought that their students would read flyers, posters, news articles, or e-mails about campus safety issues but only one-fifth of parents felt their student would attend a crime prevention-campus safety program. Approximately 55% of parents felt that these materials and programs would change how their students protected their property. Parents with college education were more likely to be unsure of the effect of this type of programming than their counterparts. Parents with high school education were more likely to discount the impact this type of these flyers, posters news articles, or e-mails ($\chi^2 = 8.10$, df = 2, p = .017).

A slight majority (51%) of parents thought that these materials and programs would change how their students protected themselves from harm. Again, parents with college educations were more likely to be unsure of the effect of this type of programming than their counterparts. Parents with high school education were more likely to discount the impact this type of information ($\chi^2 = 7.76$, df = 2, p = .021).

Finally, a similar number of parents (51%) thought that these materials and programs would change how their students moved around the campus. Parents with college education were more likely to be unsure of the effect of this type of programming than their counterparts. Parents with high school educations were more likely to discount the impact this prevention-awareness strategy ($\chi^2 = 6.61$, df = 2, p = .037).

Parents' Views of Administrators Who Share Information

In this particular study, almost 9 out of 10 parents remembered college administrators discussing campus crime issues with them during the summer orientation program. Seven out of ten remembered having college personnel discuss campus crime issues with them during their admissions visit and campus tour (see Table 3). As a result of these conversations and the materials provided, 84% of parents reported feeling an increased confidence in those responsible for campus safety. Parents with college educations were less likely to feel this way, but the significance of this difference must be interpreted with caution because of small cell size ($\chi^2 = 3.92$, df = 1, p = .050).

About 22% of parents responded affirmatively when asked if they had raised questions about campus crime and campus safety with the administrators with whom they spoke. Parents who had high school educations, who were bringing their first child to college, and who had experience crime in their immediate family were more likely to ask questions than their counterparts, but these differences were not significant.

When asked if parents had talked with their student about these issues, more than 75% said they had. Parents who had experienced crime in their immediate family were more likely to talk with their first-year students, but this difference was not statistically significant.

Ninety percent of parents responded affirmatively when asked if college administrators were forthcoming and candid about campus safety issues. Parents who were bringing their first child to college (93%) were more likely to respond positively than their counterparts (86%) who had other children in college ($\chi^2 = 4.75$, df = 1, p = .029). Similarly, parents who did not have experience with crime in their immediate family (93%) were more likely to respond positively than their counterparts (82%) who had experienced crime in their immediate family unit ($\chi^2 = 9.10$, df = 1, p = .003).

To check for a response pattern bias, a similar question was placed near the end of the questionnaire. When parents were asked if they thought college administrators were trying to hide information about campus crime, about 96% responded negatively. Parents who did *not* have experience with crime in their immediate family (98%) were more likely to respond negatively to this item than their counterparts (91%) who had experienced crime in their immediate family unit ($\chi^2 = 7.78$, df = 1, p = .005). No other difference was found to be significant.

Table 3
Chi-Square Results on Parent Views of College Administrators Who Share Information

Item	Yes	No	Chi-Square	df	p
Remembered administrators discussing campus crime issues during summer orientation					
Education level					
High school	32 (87%)	5 (13%)	.203	1	.651
College	354 (89%)	44 (11%)			
Total	386 (89%)	49 (11%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	214 (91%)	22 (9%)	1.94	1	.163
Second or more	172 (86%)	27 (14%)			
Total	386 (89%)	49 (11%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	102 (90%)	11 (10%)	.357	1	.550
No victim	284 (88%)	38 (11%)			
Total	386 (89%)	49 (11%)			
Remembered administrators discussing campus crime during admission visit					
Education level					
High school	27 (75%)	9 (25%)	.010	1	.921
College	268 (74%)	93 (26%)			
Total	295 (68%)	102 (26%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	160 (76%)	50 (24%)	.828	1	.363
Second or more	135 (72%)	52 (28%)			
Total	295 (74%)	102 (26%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	88 (81%)	20 (19%)	2.86	1	.090
No victim	212 (72%)	82 (28%)			
Total	300 (74%)	102 (26%)			

Table 3 (con't)
Chi-Square Results on Parent Views of College Administrators Who Share Information

Item	Yes	No	Chi-Square	df	p
Remembered asking campus safety questions of administrators with whom they spoke					
Educational level					
High school	10 (27%)	27 (73%)	.701	1	.403
College	84 (21%)	314 (79%)			
Total	94 (22%)	341 (78%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	59 (25%)	177 (75%)	3.50	1	.061
Second or more	35 (20%)	164 (79%)			
Total	94 (22%)	341 (78%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	28 (25%)	85 (75%)	.905	1	.341
No victim	66 (21%)	256 (79%)			
Total	94 (22%)	341 (78%)			
Remembered talking with their student about campus safety issues					
Educational level					
High school	26 (70%)	11 (30%)	1.20	1	.237
College	311 (78%)	87 (22%)			
Total	337 (77%)	98 (23%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	184 (78%)	52 (22%)	.072	1	.788
Second or more	153 (77%)	46 (23%)			
Total	337 (78%)	98 (22%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	95 (84%)	18 (16%)	3.80	1	.052
No victim	242 (75%)	80 (25%)			
Total	337 (78%)	98 (22%)			

Table 3 (con't)
Chi-Square Results on Parent Views of College Administrators Who Share Information

Item	Yes	No	Chi-Square	df	p
Felt increased confidence in those responsible for campus safety					
Educational level					
High school	28 (97%)	1 (3%)	3.92	1	.050
College	244 (83%)	50 (17%)			
Total	272 (84%)	51 (16%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	152 (86%)	24 (14%)	1.34	1	.246
Second or more	120 (82%)	27 (18%)			
Total	272 (84%)	51 (16%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	61 (78%)	17 (22%)	2.78	1	.095
No victim	211 (86%)	34 (14%)			
Total	272 (84%)	51 (16%)			
Think that administrators were forthcoming and candid about campus safety issues					
Educational level					
High school	30 (94%)	2 (6%)	.622	1	.430
College	301 (89%)	36 (11%)			
Total	331 (90%)	38 (10%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	192 (93%)	15 (7%)	4.75	1	.029
Second or more	139 (86%)	23 (14%)			
Total	331 (90%)	38 (10%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	81 (82%)	18 (18%)	9.10	1	.003
No victim	250 (93%)	20 (7%)			
Total	331 (90%)	38 (10%)			

Table 3 (con't)
Chi-Square Results on Parent Views of College Administrators Who Share Information

Item	Yes	No	Chi-Square	df	p
Feel that administrators were trying to hide information about campus crime					
Educational level					
High school	1 (3%)	32 (97%)	.100	1	.752
College	15 (4%)	345 (96%)			
Total	16 (4%)	377 (96%)			
Experience with children in college					
First child	10 (5%)	205 (95%)	.409	1	.532
Second or more	6 (3%)	172 (97%)			
Total	16 (4%)	377 (96%)			
Experience with crime in immediate family					
Victim	9 (9%)	94 (91%)	7.78	1	.005
No victim	7 (2%)	283 (98%)			
Total	16 (4%)	377 (96%)			

* Some percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Discussion

These data come from a single institution, and although the participants were identified randomly, some self-selection occurred. Parents who decided not to complete the full checkout procedure on the second day of orientation may have different responses than those who did. Given the data collection method used, the researcher could not assess response bias between participants and non-participants. Still, the information provided in this study is noteworthy and should be of interest to college administrators, campus law enforcement officers, and policy makers.

Despite a 10-year effort to increase the usefulness of the annual college crime report and to distribute it more widely, only about one-quarter of parents participating in this study knew about the Clery Act and read the campus crime summary included in the student's admission packet. Only 15% read the mandated annual report before attending summer orientation with their student. With respect to making a decision about college choice, only 6% of parents reported being influenced by any of this material. Interestingly, these percentages are strikingly similar to those reported by students. In their national study involving 3,866 students, Janosik and Gehring (in press) found that 27% of students

knew about the Act, 22% read the annual report, and 8% reported using campus crime information in their decision about college choice. Parents seem no more interested in this information that students do.

If one of the primary goals of the Clery Act is to provide crime information so that parents, potential students, and potential employees will be better able to evaluate an institution before they make a commitment to it, then based on these results, one would have to conclude that Clery has been ineffective. Groups specifically targeted by the Act do not read the mandated reports.

Parents thought their students would be more likely to read campus crime and campus safety material contained in campus produced flyers, posters, news articles, and e-mail (67%). They were less positive about the potential of their students reading an annual crime report (36%) or attending a campus crime prevention program (19%). Perhaps not surprisingly, parents' views were different than those held by students. On the one hand, parents were a little optimistic. In a separate study, only 60% of students reported reading timely crime related information produced by their institutions and 22% of students reported reading the annual report (Janosik & Gehring, in press). On the other hand, 27% of students reported attending a crime prevention program.

Parents in this study reported that campus crime and campus safety were topics frequently discussed in admission visits and summer orientation. Parents also perceived the campus and the immediate area off campus as being extremely safe. Despite these positive feelings and the apparent good work of college administrators and staff, parents with college educations were less likely to feel an increased confidence in those responsible for campus safety. Parents who had sent other children to college were less likely to feel that college administrators were being candid and forthcoming about campus crime issues. Parents who had experience with crime in their immediate family were less likely to feel that college administrators were being candid about campus crime and were more likely to feel that college administrators were trying to hide information. Clearly, ones previous life experiences influence how one perceives the world. Does having experience with other children in college simply make one more skeptical? Does having a college education make one more analytical? Does having greater personal experience with crime make one less trusting? In this study, the researcher could not determine if these parents were responding to some personal predisposition or a specific institutional concern. These dynamics are worth additional inquiry. Does trust erode with greater familiarity? If so, how could college administrators address this phenomenon effectively?

Other issues should be addressed by additional study. This study, for example, did not reveal mothers and fathers, nor was the gender of the students ascertained. Would fathers of daughters respond differently than the mothers? Would fathers of sons show as much concern about campus crime? These are questions that might be addressed by other studies.

Conclusion

In this study, it appeared that parents were no more aware and knowledgeable of the Clery Act than student groups. Interestingly, parents who have experienced crime in their immediately family and parents who have already sent children to college were no more aware of the Act than their counterparts and were no more likely to ask questions about campus safety than their counterparts.

Additionally, campus crime information continues to play almost no role in decisions about college choice. Other institutional factors such as academic reputation, cost, distance from home, and attractiveness of the campus most likely remain the dominant points of consideration in this decision-making process.

Although most parents are talking with their sons and daughters about campus safety as they prepare to bring them to our college campuses, it does not appear that they use the information provided in the federally mandated reports in these conversations. These findings are disappointing given the effort, time, and resources devoted to the task of compliance, which Gehring and Callaway (1997) suggest can be considerable.

The majority of parents identify passive media campaigns as the most likely campus safety / crime prevention strategy most likely to change student behavior, as do students (Janosik, 2001; Janosik & Gehring, in press). Although timely information about campus safety and campus crime aggressively delivered will not guarantee that students will make better decisions about protecting their property and themselves from harm, it holds the more promise. The federally mandated reports continue to be largely ignored.

Finally, worth noting in this study, is the fact that parents held very positive views about the institution, the administrators with whom they spoke, and those who were responsible for campus safety. Orientation and campus visit programs that include frequent and honest conversations about campus safety issues can go a long way in helping students and parents understand the risks inherent on a college campus and should be viewed as an important step in developing and maintaining the trust necessary for important parent-institution relationships. As this study shows, parents, based on their educational attainment and family experiences, have different concerns and beliefs. College administrators would be well served by attending to these differences in their campus programming efforts.

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